

**SENATE JUDICIARY**Exhibit No. SDate 11/30/15Bill No. SB 179

Hello, my name is Brianne Harrington. I am the owner of the Painted Pot in downtown Helena and I'm here to speak in favor of SB179. I believe everyone should have equal opportunity for employment, housing, and public accommodations. I am a mother, business owner, and a Montana native. I want protections for my fellow Montanans based on sexual orientation and gender identity because I want my son to grow up in a state that celebrates the diversity of our peoples as well as the beauty of our natural habitat. I want him to know that everyone in Montana gets a fair deal and won't every have to worry about being jobless or homeless because of who they are or who they love. I want my son to grow up proud of where he comes from knowing that Montanans will always take care of our residents and visitors.

I want protections for my fellow Montanans based on sexual orientation and gender identity because as a business owner I want to encourage new businesses and growth for our state. Communities need things like good schools, attractive shopping, and amenities to attract small and large businesses to open shop. Community values of dignity, respect, fairness, and equality do the same thing. This bill simply codifies these values for all. Doing so creates an attractive climate for prospective businesses, employees, and their families. Also, as a small business owner, my employees are my family. I want to know that my family is always protected from discrimination.

I want protections for my fellow Montanans based on sexual orientation and gender identity because I've always been proud to call myself a Montanan and I want to keep that pride in my state. The qualities of justice and equality that bring us together are far greater than our differences. This bill isn't just about protecting our neighbors, employees, family, and friends from experiencing discrimination. It's about branding our state as a welcoming and diverse community. Thank you for time.